

Chicago¹Lawyer[®]

Volume 31 Number 02 • chicagolawyer magazine.com



Law firm
CULTURE

Global
REAL ESTATE

The **Next Generation**
Rising stars of the trial bar

Looking to the future: 10 trial lawyers on the rise

There's a special breed of lawyer that thrives on the courtroom battle.

For them, arguing a case in front of a jury can be the most thrilling aspect of practicing law.

Every generation has seen its gifted trial lawyers. And while there may be fewer opportunities today — particularly in the civil arena — than there were for the lawyers who honed their trial skills in the courtroom decades ago, there are promising young lawyers who are rising above that challenge.

Chicago Lawyer spoke with veteran trial lawyers, law firm partners, judges and other prominent people in the legal community to find some of the stellar trial lawyers of the next generation, those in their 30s and early 40s who bear watching in the years ahead.

There are many young trial lawyers who are showing excellence in the courtroom. We believe the ten profiled here are among them.

Chris Lind

Armed with a bachelor's degree in economics, Chris Lind entered law school with the idea of venturing into the business world.

"I didn't believe an MBA, educationally, was as worthwhile as a law degree. I went to law school thinking I'd leverage the law degree into the business world," he said.

But that plan quickly changed.

"As soon as I got to law school, I enjoyed the debate and trial side of it," said Lind, who graduated first in the class of 1994 at Northwestern University School of Law. "I quickly learned it would be a heck of a lot of fun to be a trial lawyer."

At 39, Lind, who is a partner in Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott, has successfully represented major corporations and Big Four accounting firms in big-ticket litigation — mostly on the defense side — in trials involving patent infringement, accountant liability, antitrust, and other commercial disputes. He has also had success on the plaintiff's side, and was appointed special trial counsel to the U.S. Department of Justice in 2001 in its antitrust action against Microsoft.

"This allows me to have the adversary process of being a trial lawyer, but at the same time learn about how lots of different businesses work, and still being immersed in the business world," Lind said. "Instead of running the company, you're helping companies solve their problems."

Lind estimates he has handled dozens of cases, including approximately 10 trials, half of which he served in a first-chair role.

"It's an unbelievable adrenalin rush and high. It's the most exciting and satisfying part of practicing law," Lind said.

On a month-long trial, he said, except for Saturday nights and sometimes Friday nights, "I probably sleep three or four hours a



Chris Lind

Age: 39

Position: Partner in Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott

Law degree: Northwestern University School of Law, 1994

Inspiration: "The challenge of it is what inspires me. Knowing that if you're not 100 percent on your game you've got the potential to let a client down, or not get the result you really want to get for your client, drives you like crazy."

night — for 30 days straight.

"You're on your feet, paying close attention to everything that happens the whole time," Lind said. "It's truly a physical, as much as mental, battle. But that makes it fun."

His recent victories include two wins for United Technologies' Hamilton Sundstrand division against Honeywell International, Inc.: the reversal of a \$46.5 million jury verdict in a patent infringement case, and a defense verdict in a patent infringement case where Honeywell was seeking \$135 million.

Except for a one-year clerkship with Judge A. Raymond Randolph on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, Lind has spent his entire 14-year law career with Bartlit Beck.

In court, said Philip S. Beck, Lind is a "spectacular" cross-examiner.

"He has the whole package, but the most difficult thing in trial work is cross-examining witnesses. You're doing battle with some very savvy, smart people. You're basically arguing economics with an economist, or you're arguing engineering with an engineer," Beck said. "That's really where Chris shines."

C. Barry Montgomery, of Williams Montgomery & John, worked with Lind on a case in which his firm partnered with Bartlit Beck. He said Lind's "combination of intellect, demeanor, ease in the courtroom, and work ethic make him one of the most effective trial lawyers I know."

Bradford P. Lyerla, of Marshall Gerstein & Borun, who opposed Lind on a case, said, "His ability to make arguments, his ability to respond to the inevitable little, surprising disputes that come up daily in a trial — he graded very highly in all that stuff, better than some of the more experienced lawyers I've seen."